



## THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

**SMOKING AND HEALTH**—Alton Ochsner, M.D. Julian Messner, Inc., 8 West 40th Street, New York 18, New York, 1959. 108 pages, \$3.00.

The 1954 booklet on "Smoking and Cancer" now reappears as "Smoking and Health." The dust jacket tells us that "Here are the facts . . . proof that smoking not only causes lung cancer, but is contributory to other types of cancer, to heart disease, miscarriage, menstrual disturbances, Buerger's disease and stomach ulcers. Furthermore, it is a factor in impotence in men and sterility in women." The book is now divided into six sections, instead of the former sixteen, has some new charts but no new scientific information to substantiate many of the bold pronouncements liberally interlarded. For example, after quoting President Truman—"Columbus brought syphilis to the Indians and they gave him tobacco. It is doubtful which is worse," Dr. Ochsner goes on to say, "Syphilis can be cured quickly with antibiotic treatment; science is still looking for some way to cure advanced cancers and heart disease," the implication being that smoking is as certainly linked to these disorders as syphilis is to the treponema.

The author fails to record the following facts:

1. No case of lung cancer has been produced in man or comparable animal by prolonged application of cigarette smoke.

2. No proof has been established that the samples of cigarette smokers studied in the United States and Great Britain are biologically identical with the samples of non-smokers. Many biostatisticians question the true comparability of the two population groups. The final report of the famous American study emphasizes that "The most important finding of this study was the high degree of association between cigarette smoking and *total death rate*." In other words, it would appear that heavy cigarette smokers are "a different breed of cats" constitutionally and in general mode of life.

3. No answer is available to the curious paradox that the "precancerous changes" of Auerbach are predominant in the trachea and main bronchi, which are precisely the places where primary lung cancer is relatively uncommon.

4. No explanation is agreed on for the fact that in England the death rate from lung cancer is approximately twice that in the United States, but the reported cigarette consumption is only about one-half.

5. No valid explanation exists for the curious absence of any significant increase in the prevalence of laryngeal cancer in the United States in the last 35 years.

On page 97, in a paragraph dealing with the legal responsibility of the tobacco companies, the author reproduces the sentence, "For if it is an offense to produce foods which are harmful to the health of customers it is an offense to produce smoking products which are too often deadly to those who use them." Are then the milk companies to be sued for producing high-fat foods, the chicken farmers for cholesterol-laden eggs, and the wine growers for cirrhosis-inducing beverages. Like nicotine, all these substances are advertised and in a free country may alas be taken in

amounts potentially "deadly to those who use them." Are the sugar refiners, soft drink merchants and candy manufacturers to be sued for dental caries and its train of ills. Perhaps they should be, but is this for a crusading surgeon to decide? Taken in moderation, these foods and other substances come pretty close to being the staff of modern life.

The polemics in this booklet, like tobacco, should be taken in moderation.

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**TEXTBOOK OF MEDICINE, A—Tenth Edition**—Edited by Russell L. Cecil, M.D., Sc.D., Professor of Clinical Medicine Emeritus, Cornell University, and Robert F. Loeb, M.D., Sc.D., D. Hon. Causa, LL.D., Bard Professor of Medicine, Columbia University. W. B. Saunders Company, Philadelphia, 1959. 1665 pages, 182 figures—in one volume, \$16.50, or in two volumes, \$20.50.

Many texts on medicine are published. Comparatively few survive more than one or two editions. This, the tenth edition of Cecil and Loeb marks it as one of the hardier perennials of medicine, with ten editions in 32 years.

This edition, incorporating more complete changes than any previous one, rates—along with Harrison's Principles of Internal Medicine—as one of the two leading text books on general medicine available. Quite a few subjects not previously covered are now included. Despite the added material there is no increase in number of pages, because of a new and clearer type.

As the years have passed and clinical medicine has included more basic science, so has the Cecil-Loeb tended to include more between its covers. In this edition, each section has an introduction which deals with the basic science relationships of the organ system or the disease condition which comprises the main topic. Furthermore, discussions of physiology, pathology and pathogenesis have been incorporated as far as possible into the body of the clinical discussion. For example, in the section on Diseases of the Pituitary Gland, there is first given a clear and fairly detailed discussion of the hormones of the anterior lobe; farther on are separate discussions of the individual diseases.

The index is generally complete. A few flaws are found. For example; there is no cross reference listed under *atrial, auricular, arrhythmia* or *fibrillation*, despite the fact that the cardiac arrhythmias are well covered in the text.

It is inevitable that there is a certain amount of differing emphasis on various subjects. On the one hand, one finds the outstanding 22 page monograph on diabetes; on the other, there is no mention of estrogen therapy for osteitis deformans.

To summarize, this is a distinguished text book on medicine, packed full of information which is given logically and as simply as possible. It is also, as it has always been, a first class clinical book. It is highly recommended to all practitioners as well as to the medical students for whom it is primarily written.

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